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HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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SAVED BY GRACE.

"For by grace are ye saved; through faith and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."—EPH. ii. 8.

Of necessity all divine revelation or teaching has a limitation which goes far to determine the method of instruction in every age. There can be no other teaching except such as is commensurate with the faculty, the intelligence, and the moral condition of those to whom the teaching is sent. Experience also avouches that in teaching men, their ideas, their institutions, their customs, the reigning philosophies of the time, will have much to do in determining the manner and the form of instruction. We see this to be so, viewed not only philosophically but historically. Such is the mode in which moral truth has been developed. It has conformed itself as to methods, as to magnitudes, if I may so say, to the want or the receptive power of the age in which it came to men. In the most ancient time we discern a mode of teaching very different from that which obtained during the period of the prophets; and the instruction derived from them is very different in its adaptations and methods from that which was given by Jesus Christ. So, when the apostle to the Gentiles went forth preaching the great substantial truths of Christ, you will discern very clearly that when he preached to the Jews he adapted himself to them, through figures, through language, through illustrations, through manners and customs which they understood; but when he went to Athens he conformed his mode of address to the intellectual habits and perceptions of the Greeks. At Corinth, in his letters to the various

Grecian colonial churches, and everywhere among the Jews in their synagogues, he adapted his instruction to the reigning ideas of those to whom he spake.

Now, the consequence is this : that in every age, among free and intelligent people who are raised above lethargy and general death, there are certain modes of conception, certain degrees of knowledge, derived from science, from philosophy, and from history, from the social conditions in which men live, from the nature of their government, or from those habitudes which have been established by climate or occupation, so that insensibly, and almost without recognition, different nations in different periods have their own styles of thought ; and springing from those is the necessity of adapting to each age, according to its mode of thought, the great substantial truths which have been held in the Christian church. At a time when royalty expressed the highest conception of dignity and beauty, there were derived from royalty certain ideas that would be more intelligible to those who were bred under royal institutions than to any others. The glory of sovereignty was a thing in which the subjects of Solomon had a very near and close sympathy ; but what is there in the glory of sovereignty that is sweet to a man who has been brought up in democratic New England or democratic America—save through the association of history or poetry ? We have been trained by our institutions, not so much to center the glory of the state in its representative head, making him magnificent for the sake of the reflection of his glory upon the people : we have a new political idea ; we are attempting to unfold and develop a pure state at the bottom, rather than at the top, and to make mankind more worthy, more powerful, not declaring, as the ancients did, that God gives power to the king, and that the king gives privilege to the people under him, but declaring the king to be gone, and aristocracy to be gone—declaring that God gives power to the *mass* of men, that education springs up from them, that government springs from them, and that all honors and dignities spring from them. So there has been a perfect revolution of ideas ; and if you attempt to talk to us in the language of the original condition

of men, you have to construe it so that sovereignty shall mean according to our democratic ideas what it used to mean to the ancients according to their royal conditions and notions.

It is this subtle process of translation, both linguistic and philosophical, that makes preaching necessary ; and it is this that should lead every preacher to adapt himself and the Gospel to the particular characteristics of the age in which he lives. We are living in a transitional period. Everybody is saying that old institutions are relaxing, that customs are changing, that ideas are developing differently, that new philosophies are coming in, and that science occupies a position in relation to education which it never did before. The study of man is conducted on entirely different principles ; and to go on, under such circumstances, and teach in simply the old language and phrases, is not to teach at all, or is to teach falsely.

On the other hand, to adapt certain great truths, that will be true until time shall end, to the particular forms or modes of thought in any particular age is not to destroy those truths, nor to take them away : it is to bring them under new phases and into new points of view, so that they shall convey the same sense of *truth* to men that they formerly did when they were taught according to the phraseology, the customs and the figures which belonged to the earlier age.

Now, it has been taught that all men are sinful, and upon that has been raised I know not how many theories of how they came to be sinful, and of what was the origin of evil. The tomes written on that simple subject would fill this house full. Where did evil come from ? Was sin of God or of the devil ? Why did God permit it to enter the world ? Was he not free ? Was he limited ? Was there a division of power between him and his old antagonist of evil ? Or, if he permitted sin, why did he permit it ? Was it the necessary means of the greatest good ? So says one school ; and thereupon a long controversy ensues. “Is there such a thing as sin anyhow ?” says another ; and thereupon great latitudes and great mischiefs follow.

Now, in our age, however much men may seek to cover up these questions, such is the intelligence among the great mass of the common people, such is the habit of discussion in magazines and newspapers of great subjects like these, such especially, is the diffusion of scientific knowledge, such is the investigation into the nature of man, his physical nature, his social nature, his moral nature,—such is the study into the conditions which surround him in life, and the influences which are brought to bear upon him, that they cannot be covered up. In other words, the thorough, scientific study of human nature is going on, and it will not stop. It is going to be pressed clear through. It is diffused among the common people. They are reading and thinking ; and if the church is afraid that heretical and heterodox notions will prevail, and insists upon the old terminology, and shuts out the light of modern knowledge on this subject, what will the result be ? It will be that men will not go to church ; or that, if they go, they will go for something else besides instruction. Either they will stay away, as more and more they are doing (at any rate that is the complaint), or they will go and make fatal divisions. They will go to church as a certain sort of charm, and will yield a kind of compliance which they think perhaps has some mysterious virtue in it, and inures to respectability, while they will underneath carry on their own thoughts and feelings ; and there will be a division between men's belief and their conduct. It is much better, therefore, that the great truths of the Gospel should receive interpretation according to the generation in which they are taught.

But is not a truth a truth forever, and the same ? No, it is not. Why, suppose I were to say of Agriculture that it changes from age to age ? What ! does nature change ? Was not Agriculture in the earliest periods in Greece, and in Rome, and in mediæval Europe down to our time, substantially the same ? No : certain great laws of nature were always conformed to, but development under these laws was different ; so that the description of Agriculture in one age is not the description of it in another.

The question of man's sinfulness has been largely dis-

cussed. It has been taken for granted that men were sinful. Are they? It has been said that they were universally sinful. Are they? It has been said that they were depraved totally. Are they? These are fair questions, and they are questions that are very largely debated. Some men (and they are esteemed the most orthodox) hold that men are polluted, thoroughly undone, sinful in every part and particular of their nature. Others speak of the dignity of human nature, and of the beauty of the hearts of men before God. They surround the intelligence and moral sense of man with all majestic phrases. I belong to the first class; I believe that all mankind are sinful; and yet, I cannot accept the old terminology, and say that men are "totally depraved." I cannot say, speaking philosophically, that men are polluted. In the mood of profound contrition and grief, using the language of feeling, which is always a language of extravagance and of poetry, I can say that I am vile; but I cannot follow that out in the language of philosophy, and say "I am vile." In the language of emotion, I can say, "We are polluted"; but when I come to the exact philosophical statement of facts I cannot say that I think all men are polluted. I cannot use that terminology. The language of emotion is not the language of fact, nor the language of philosophy. It is something larger and different. In its place it is useful, and when first used and fresh used, like all symbolism, it is good; but the moment it becomes common by repetition it is false.

If, when I am overwhelmed by an ideal sense of the grandeur of God and nature, I call myself a worm of the dust, it is true, and I do not half express what I feel; but if I come in here and say to you, literally, "You are worms of the dust," is that justified by fact? is it justified by wisdom? The incongruity is such that men, though they do not want to give up the old canons and doctrines of the church, hold on to their orthodoxy as it were with their left hand, but go on preaching as things seem to them, almost never using what they have professed to believe, unless it be in Presbytery or Convention where some man's character is involved, and where all their orthodoxy comes out. Ordinarily, and for the

most part, they teach according to the facts of life, and according to the practical developments of truth as they see them. And that is what they ought to do.

Now, is no liberty to be permitted to a man by which his orthodoxy and common preaching shall run together, one helping the other? One school has held that mankind were brought into this world through a federal head, Adam, and that all men fell in Adam; and if that is propounded as a literal historical fact, then the inferences to be deduced from it are many: First, that we inherit a corrupt nature—a nature that from birth and from inherent necessity goes wrong. If that be so, then we are obliged to hold that the supreme Governor of the universe created a pair, and put them in the Garden of Eden, where, without any experience whatever as to right and wrong, they sinned by taking what their senses wanted—fruit—against the Commandment; that for thus sinning, without knowledge, and in obedience to their impetuous desire, their whole posterity was cursed; and that this God of love and wisdom has been pouring out that posterity, myriads upon myriads, the stream forever and ever spreading, and widening, and deepening; and that not only have these been inheriting penalty on account of the sin of their first parents, with which they had nothing whatever to do, but that after this life they are to inherit a nature which they could not rectify, and with which they had nothing to do; and that, suffering by reason of a corruption which they did not bring upon themselves, and which they had no power to correct, they were to be eternally lost in the world to come.

This scheme of the sinfulness of man, to have been held in ages before light dawned; to have been held because something had to be framed as a philosophical explanation; to have been held before men's rights were known, and before society was organized on any thing like a high and noble basis; to have been held when men were cramped and confined, and when manners and customs were such that men did not feel the acerbity and awfulness of such ascriptions, is not a matter of surprise. I do not wonder that it was held in the early ages; and those ages are not to be derided; that

scheme is not to be covered with obloquy, for it was a scheme of men in the childhood of reason ; but in our day to preach such a scheme is to blaspheme the name of the Highest. To tell me that I am to love a being who damns myriads of men beyond all computation because they inherit a corrupt nature, which they had nothing to do with corrupting, from their first parents in the famous Garden of Eden—to tell me that, is an infinite violation of every conception which we have of rectitude of character, and rectitude of government.

But we have been educated in the spirit of the Gospel. Our ideas have been enlarged as to what a man should be, as to what a magistrate should be, and as to what a father should be. We have not gone toward barbarism : we have gone toward Christianity ; and we are going toward Christianity. Every virtue becomes more radiant as the world advances, every trait of manliness and nobility becomes more resplendent ; and we demand more of the individual, of the magistrate, and of the parent.

Now, taking the dignity and spirit of Christianity, we have a right to demand that the supremacy of the universe should center in a being who is not inferior to what we see developed in the household or in the state—in a being that is transcendently superior to any that earth has produced ; and that that superiority shall consist, not in brute power, not in arbitrary will, not in the feeling, “I can, and therefore I may ;” but in this : “I am the Lord God, slow to anger, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin ; and” [best of all, as showing that this is done, not from moral laxity, but as a part of that great scheme by which men are brought up from animalism,] I will by no means clear the guilty.” In other words, “Pain and penalty for the violated law under all providences shall pursue men in the grand scheme that I am supervising, by which all men shall live, and grow, and expand.”

I can worship a God who has excellences that make my father and mother dear, and that make me love moral heroes or moral heroism ; but to clothe a God with those traits which in human histories have been the attributes of Neros

and Caligulas, and which we detest in human righteous governments, is the broad road to infidelity. It is tempting every man, by the best part of his own nature, to revolt from what is called truth, if he does not know that it is not true. So he is often thrown away by his best instincts from the church; and he thinks he is infidel, whereas he is a better Christian in the thought of God than many that are Christian teachers.

"But, on the other hand, if you set aside any historical origin of this kind of man's sinfulness, what have you to propose in its stead?" I do not propose anything except simply what I see. "And what do you see?" What has the world seen? I think, whatever may be men's theories or philosophies, the facts of history will state with louder and clearer emphasis from this time on, that the human race came upon the globe at an extremely low point. Men were created, I will say (not following the mere imaginations or theories of scientific men) at the very minimum point of humanity—as near to zero as it is possible for human beings to live. Historically, the unfolding of men has been very gradual; and, beginning with very little knowledge, and with still less function, they have come up in the knowledge, for instance, of agriculture, of the mechanic arts, of legislation, of manufacturing industries, of commerce, of civil polity, of the organization of men into states, and of war. There has been a steady growth from a low seminal point up to the present condition of humanity, the world over; and instead of men giving evidence of having fallen from a very high state of perfection, they give evidence, of the most unquestionable character, that they came from the slenderest point. So that when we look at the facts, they are these: that man appears to have been created at the bottom; that the divine scheme has been to take men at their germinant point, at the alphabet of their faculties, and, little by little, spell out civilization by gradual instruction, till the present day; this brings them into the analogy of the development of the whole universe, as science is revealing it to us now.

But look at the actual condition of the race to-day. How are men brought into life? There will be, before the

sun goes down, a thousand children born in Africa, that were not born when you came here this morning. How are they born? With "original righteousness," as the theologians call it? Those black bushmen's children, those wild African children, those children of northern Africans under Mohammedian influences; those thousand children born into life to-day—were they stopped and asked how they would like to be born? Was a choice given them? No; they were pushed into life without consciousness, without faculty, with nothing but germs. They are what buds are to-day on trees that look forward to next summer, wrapped up tight. And how endowed? Bringing in with them the accumulated tendencies and traits of their parents. Are they to blame? When they first begin to grow they are as animals. Their first function is eating, drinking, sleeping—nothing more. As they grow a little, combativeness, self-defense, and such lower tendencies come in. They are born into the depths of darkness, never hearing the sound of the church bell or the organ's tone, never having the advantage of orthodox teaching, never listening to the preacher's voice, living in the bush or wilderness, or wherever they are, being like the lion's cubs—whelped! Such is their condition.

Now, did these children fall from original righteousness? How were they created? They were created, as I suppose their ancestors were, simply a bundle of capacities, depending for their development upon the institutions which they should come under, upon the men they should meet, and upon the knowledge which they should obtain. That is the real fact, I may say, in respect to nine out of every ten, yes, ninety-nine out of every hundred, of the people on the globe to-day; and when you come, not to look at what theologians say, not to look at the ingenious construction of texts, but to open your eyes and look on the world as God made it, and as it lies right before you, how do men enter upon this life? Do they come in nobles, heroes, saints? Are they sprung from the divine mint shining like silver dollars from the die, and bearing the image and superscription of God, ready for universal circulation? Do not individual men come into life, in the vast majority of cases, at an extremely low point?

and when you look back to the beginning, do you not see that the races have risen up by development from that low point? The whole creation beholds men born into life at a low stage, and subject to growth, development, education, unfolding.

It is on this ground that I say men are sinful—that is to say, as I use the term “sinful.” It is a term often used in a sense so vague and general that it will not bear to be measured with any literalness; but I hold that men are born into life without what is called “original righteousness.” This is defined in the Catechism as one of the signs and tokens of depravity. If you say that it is one of the signs and concomitants of inferiority, I agree with you. That is so; men are born not only without original righteousness, but without anything. When born they cannot sing; they cannot talk; they cannot walk; they cannot work; they cannot think; they cannot feel. They are at zero when they are born. They can cry; they can suck; they can sleep, and that is the sum total of their functions. When, therefore, the Catechism says that men were born without righteousness, it makes that a specific which should be a generic. They were born, by the divine decree, at the bottom; and it was the divine purpose that they should unfold and come up. Early writers on this subject were after the truth; in part they apprehended it, but they did not know how to state it. It is true that in the divine wisdom it was thought better that the race should start at the bottom and come up by unfolding. We know that was the decree, because that has been the universal fact. When, therefore, men are said to be imperfect, all creation rises and says, “Yes.” Call for the vote of high and low, bond and free, black and white, the world around, and there would not be an unlifted hand, if the question be, Are not men born with infirmity?—that is, without strength, weak, at the bottom?

Come with me. I will dismiss for the moment that mass of outlying humanity, with no literature, no institutions, the denizens of the wilderness; I will leave them out, as perhaps overcharging the picture; I will take men as they exist in civilized or semi-civilized society. Are those men who exist

on the higher planes of life living, in fact, according to the physical laws of their condition? It may be said that men do not know their own structure, that they are ignorant of the organs of their body, and of the functions of these organs; and that is true; but however you may limit or define it, the question is this: Are not men, as they come up, even regarding them from a physical standpoint, continually violating the conditions implied in their creation? In their best development, in their highest conduct, do they not fall short of even the physical law represented in them and in their surroundings? There can be no doubt about that. By ignorance children would stumble on every hand if it were not for the righteousness of the parents—that is, if it were not for their forethought and caution. It is by reason of the parent's intervention that the child escapes sickness and death, and grows to manhood. And in manhood, taking men as they live in society, when you look at their food, and sleep, and various dissipations and exertions, how few there are that live according to the physical law of obedience?

Try them by the social standard. How many men can say, "I am perfect," even according to the requirements of social life, which are comparatively low? How many men feel that they give all that is demanded of them by society? How many feel that they refrain from all that society has a right to expect that they will refrain from? In exalted hours, when they can measure manhood by a higher standard than that of the animal, how many men feel that they have been as good fathers and husbands and brothers and neighbors as they say they have been, when ministers talk to them? —for what men say when they are arguing is one thing, and what men think in their better moments is another thing.

Take the standard of citizenship, measuring by what the state requires, and there is no man who feels that he comes up to it. The more a man he is, the more he feels that that standard is so high that he cannot reach it with all his striving and unfolding. Even as a citizen he is conscious that he is filled with mistakes, with ignorances, with inaptitudes, and with all manner of non-observances.

Now, if you introduce a higher standard, and measure a

man, not by his physical structure, nor by his social relations, nor by his relations as a citizen to government and law, but by the divine ideal of perfect rectitude as represented in God, let any man ask himself, in a moment of rationality, "Do I live according to this standard?" and he will perceive that he fails utterly to reach it. It is when men measure themselves in this way, looking upward, that they feel inclined to lay their hand on their mouth, and their mouth in the dust, and say, "Unclean! unclean!"

How much of this depends upon their condition for which they are not responsible, is one question; but I shall not discuss it, because, although every man feels that a great deal depends upon knowledge, custom, circumstances and various influences about him, in consideration of which a large deduction should be made, yet, after all, every man knows that where his personality comes in he has fallen short of his knowledge, and moral sense, and purpose, and possibility.

I look at the oak that has been growing in old Virginia in the balmy temperate zone—the best zone on the globe—and see what a magnificent creature that tree is, which spreads itself abroad as if it would touch the east and the west, which stands triumphant over winter, which has withstood a hundred thousand storms, which has been the benefactor of uncounted herds that found shelter beneath it, and which has been the home and temple of myriads of birds that have sat in its branches and sung there; looking at it, I wonder not that the old Druids thought God lived in such places. But I go north till I come to the borders of the frigid zone, and there I find another tree of precisely the same species. I could take my cloak and cover it up. It is a hundred years old; but it is dwarfed, and scraggy, and undeveloped. Yet, small pigmy oak as it is, it is own brother to that vast tree of the temperate zone. Now, hear it tell its story: "I, too, would have grown; but the winter has pinched my roots; storms have abused my branches; I have seen every year but about four or six weeks of sunshine, pale and poor; and it is not my fault that I have grown so little." No, poor thing! it is not your *fault*; but it is your *fact*. There you are, and you are not any bigger than you are. You may say that there

is this, that or the other reason for your not being larger, but *there you are!*

Now, I say in respect to men : They may give a thousand reasons for their dwarfed condition, for their low moral state, for their lack of civilization, for their lack of refinement ; nevertheless, there they are ; and though the punitive sentence of violated law may not be issued against them, the fact remains that they are not any bigger than they are, and that they are small and undeveloped. Is not that fact in its own inherent nature enough ?

When, therefore (for now I pass to the next point), salvation is offered to the human race, what is Salvation, that it can be offered to such creatures as these ? We dispose of that very summarily in our popular theology. Salvation ? That is plain enough : You do not go to hell, and you do go to heaven—as if there were two places. Such four-square physical notions as these have very largely prevailed with regard to salvation.

As respects a sentient being, a thinking being, a being endowed with infinite expansibility, a being such as man is, what must salvation be ? Does it consist simply in the fact that he is not hereafter to be a creature of exquisite pain, and is to be a creature of exquisite joy ? That may be true, but does it at all adequately describe or hint at the essence of salvation ?

I set out as a missionary, and go north, among the Kamschatkans, and win to my confidence a young fellow, bright and apprehensive ; and I talk to him, and draw a contrast, as near as I can, between what he has been used to and what I have been used to. As his intelligence lies largely in his sensuous nature, I try to contrast his underground, filthy hole which he calls a house, with that which we call a house. I talk to him about room upon room all above ground ; and he shivers at the idea of having a house above ground, judging from his Kamschatkan experience that we must be very cold ; but I tell him of the artificial summer that we create down cellar, by which we warm the rooms. I tell him, likewise, of sofas, and chairs, and tables, and pictures, and carpets ; but what conception can he form of these

things who has seen nothing but that filthy, fish-stinking hole in which he lives? How can I frame in his mind a conception of that which is so superior to anything that ever came within his observation?

At last, when he has some glimmering conception of that, I say, "But this is the mere exterior: I am going to take you to civilization and refinement." So I try to describe to him commerce and manufacturing industry; I try to describe to him civil polity; but how little does he know about these things! What can he measure them by except the limited experience of a Kamschatkan? I say to him, in short, "Well, now, what are the worst things that you can think of?" "Oh!" he says, "the worst things that I can think of are being almost frozen and almost starved." "Well," I say, "when you come with me, you will never know cold again, and you will never know hunger again." His face brightens, and he says, "Oh! I should like to go to that place." But what idea does he form of the beauty of civilization from his thought that he is not going to be hungry nor cold any more?—for that is about all that he can understand. Beginning at that standpoint, how can I make intelligible to him an inventory of things which go to make up vigor of body, accomplishment of hand and foot, manly exercise, deftness and skill—all the things that make one a man among men; the amenities of social life; taste and affection; taking and giving; all that which kindles the imagination in the great invisible realm; all that which links a man to the ambitions and attainments of life; all that which pertains to the great historical relations of the race; all that which dignifies society and life; all the sweetness of motherhood; all the grandeur of patriotism; all those illustrious elements which make literature rich and glowing, and which no man can enumerate or paint? All these belong to civilized life; and what can the Kamschatkan know of them when I say to him, "You are going to be saved from your present condition, and are going to inherit all these things"? He is going to be saved from himself; he is going to be saved from stupidity, from inertness, from blank, arid ignorance; he is going to be saved from vulgarity; he is going to be

saved from all that allies him to the brute beast ; he is a bone-gnawing animal now, and he is going to be a man ; but you cannot measure to him the distance between himself and the average man of civilization ; nor can you interpret to him by any possibility what it is to be translated from his low state to this other and higher state, which is to be fulfilled in him by ennobling him.

Now, when men ask me, "What is salvation ?" I say, emancipation from everything that holds men down ; from the bondage of matter ; from the rigor of undeveloped tendencies ; from all the infelicities of the lower nature which are accompanied with inaptitudes, with dullness of head, with unskillfulness of hand, with shallowness of heart ; from low and degraded forms of affection ; from the vast realm of inferiority into which men are born.

We are born at the bottom. We come into life as nothing. We have grown a little ; but what do we know of the possible development and grandeur and glory of life ? In every one of the faculties of our being there is the possibility of a growth of which we can have no conception in our present condition. For how can a man interpret that of which he has had no experience ? I am told that I am going to sing in heaven ; but I have about as adequate an idea of what that will be as the Esquimaux has of the comforts and advantages of civilization. I shall cry no more. That means that all those things which make me cry shall cease. This world is the workshop, and we are rough-hewn ; but there is to be an enfranchisement which shall lift us out of this rude condition. There is to be transplantation and glorious liberation. We are to become, not companions of the animal, but sons of God. What that means, John says, does not yet appear. There is to be glorious development, wonderful uplifting, transcendent glorification, all centering around that which we do understand—the need of the heart.

God has organized our life so that all our wants center in love, revolving about it ; and more and more through life every noble nature is conscious that he is being attached to that one center. God himself is infinite love, and all human life is drawn toward him ; and all growth, all refinement, all

competency, all joy, are more and more centered in that magnificent conception of an all-wise, all-powerful, all-redeeming love.

What is to be the plenitude of summer in equatorial climes where no storms envelop the earth, where the globe swings around in its ecliptic without jar or hindrance, where the husk has fallen from the golden grain, where the rind has been taken off from the pulpy fruit, and where we stand transcendently higher than it hath entered into the heart of man to conceive? What is salvation? It consists in grandeur of mind and majesty of soul in the presence of God.

Now, have you ever done anything to buy that or to earn it? I tickle my ground with the hoe and the spade, but I never was so vain as to suppose that I made anything grow. Thou, O Husbandman of the heavens, silent, unboasting but unwasting, thou effulgent Sun, hast brought summer through the influence under which all things have grown. I, too, have done a little for myself; but if I am to rise to behold the majesty of God I shall see that I have but touched the earth with hoe or spade. O Sun of Righteousness, it is the healing of thy beams that must cure us.

Let us, now, go back and interpret the text:

“God, who is rich in mercy, hath raised us up together.”

Oh, what depths there are in some of these simple phrases! I asked, among the White Mountains, “What do you call riches up here?” The reply was, “A farmer who is not in debt, and has five thousand dollars at interest, is called rich.” At Concord I asked, “What is being rich, in this community?” “Well, if a man is not in debt, and has fifty to seventy-five thousand dollars, he is considered passing well off.” I came down to New York and asked, “What is it to be rich here?” “Ah, it would be very difficult to tell.” “Does having ten thousand dollars make a man rich?” “No.” “Twenty thousand?” “No.” “Fifty thousand?” “No.” “A hundred thousand?” “No.” “Two or three hundred thousand?” “Hardly.” “A million?” “Yes, a man begins to be considered rich when he gets up to the millions.” In New York being rich is measured on the scale

of Astor and Stewart. There are different degrees of being rich. And when you rise up from all inferiorities, and God talks about being rich—God, that out of the seed-bag of the universe threw out worlds for shining seeds, that dwells in eternity, that is Father of all things that are, far beyond the sweep of the mind-glass—when he says he is rich, how rich he must be ! and when he says he is rich in *mercy*, oh, what an affluence, oh, what a power, oh what a grandeur is there in that !

“God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is the gift of God.*”

When my mother, with prayers and up-looking of soul to God, who loved her, looked on me, a little tottering three-year-old, and laid her hand upon my head, and wished me the blessing of life, what had I done to deserve it ? Not of myself, but of her great love wherewith she loved me, she, soon to go from life, ordained me. With a mother’s touch, more sacred than that of priest or bishop, she ordained me to the Christian ministry. Do you suppose I had earned it ? Do you suppose I had anything to do with it ? It came out of the abundance of the great soul which she had. And when God, manifest in Jesus Christ, sends forth his decree of exaltation and elevation, to all that have faith to believe, and sight to behold, and discernment to perceive the other life, and to long for it,—to all these he gives this translation, this grandeur of the other sphere and of coming development. To them gave he power to become the sons of God, though he did not give them power to know how much was involved in the blessedness of that gift.

Friends, do not stand weighing out your own motives ; do not stand estimating your own labors; do not say, “ God will be pleased with me to-day, I have been so obedient.” Yes, he will be pleased with you if you are obedient ; he is glad of any appreciation of his loving nature ; but when the melody of life is given to you—namely, death and transla-

tion—your own efforts will bear, oh how small a relation to that! The transcendency, the beauty, and the grandeur of the ransomed soul in its flight are such that no man will stand in heaven, or even on the threshold of it, and see the beginnings of the eternal inheritance, and not feel, “Oh, such a gift as this I have done nothing to earn; I am not fitted for it; it is of God; it is because he is good, and not because I deserve it; it is because he gave it; it is from his abounding generosity.”

May none of you fail to receive that gift of eternal life. When the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, may you walk with them, and inherit all that heaven means, but that is quenched in interpretation by the ignorance and selfishness of this world.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

WHAT need have we, our Father, to bring before thee our wants? Or ever we had opened our eyes, or had conscious thought again this morning, all was open before thee; for thou dost not slumber nor sleep. Watchman of Israel, thine eye is upon all thy creatures. Thou knowest their uprising and their downsitting, their going out and their coming in. Thou knowest the secret thought, the inward impulse, all the outward circumstances. Thou only canst weigh in just judgment, and balances of equity, all that pertains to man here; and we do not seek to instruct thee. We draw near to thee that we may have the inspiration of thy presence. We draw near to thee to make known our wants, because in making them known, thy compassion and thy goodness rise up before us, and give us a sense of trust and faith. Thou that art supereminent above all possible weakness; thou that art infinitely gracious, nourishing thine own life, and the infinitude of life around about thee, we desire to have our conception of thy grandeur, and of the richness of thy being, augmented from time to time; for it is not in ourselves that we are strong, or wise, or firm: it is in thee; and we desire to rise into such a thought of God as shall more than fill every capacity of our being. So may we walk by faith. So may all thy gifts, which are of grace, come to us as gifts of God. May we be made rich in our thought of thy favor, and of thy love—that great love wherewith thou hast loved us from the beginning—which thou hast manifested toward us through Jesus Christ, in whom are all signs and tokens which measure the utmost limit of human conception, feeling, love, and sacredness.

Deliver us, we pray thee, from all ignoble views, and from all thoughts that bring trafficking and selfish commerce into the courts of the Lord. Give us such sentiments that we may faintly conceive of the motives by which thou art acting, and may redeem ourselves in the nature of our ascriptions to thee from those coarser ways by which vulgar men act with vulgar men. Grant that we may have such a thought of God as shall reconcile in him our highest sentiments and our most glowing enthusiasm of purity, and love, and self-denial, and self-sacrifice, and generosity, and grandeur of kindness. We beseech of thee that thou wilt humble us so that our self-conceit may be attuned into harmony with the truth as it is in Jesus. Wilt thou humble us so that we may not be impetuous nor rash in zeal, so that we may walk self-restrained and with humility before thee, and so that we may have reverence, and the inspiration of that high and true love which ministers all to all.

We beseech of thee, this day, O thou all-merciful God, for thy goodness and graciousness. Draw consciously near, we pray thee, to every one in thy presence. May thine influence pervade the souls of thy people, and may they feel that God is within them. May their thoughts follow thee. May their sorrows bring them nearer to thee. May the many souls in whom night reigns feel that indeed the star has risen. O thou that art full of gentleness, if there be any that cannot open their eyes nor lift themselves up, nor come

forth from out of their prison-house, be thou to them that Deliverer who came to break the shackle, to open prison doors, and to bring forth those that are bound; and to-day, may there be many that are bound in spirit, that are bound tight by the cords of sorrow, that are bound up by pride, by selfishness, or by the tangled threads of life, and that cannot extricate themselves—may there be many such that to-day shall have deliverance from thee; for when thou dost sing thy song, when the spring shines upon the mountains, the snows go away, and no man can tell whither they have gone; and their places are known only by the flowers and fruits which spring up behind them; and so, O Lord, when thou dost shine down upon the soul, behold it is a garden, and men wonder where are those fierce winds, and where are those biting frosts, and where are those sorrows that beat them down, and where is their heaviness and deadness of heart; and in the place of great grief there are shouts of laughter, as when the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, and then our lives are filled with joy. In many a soul thou hast made paradise where before was purgatory.

Draw near, to-day, we beseech of thee, to all who are in peril; to all who are in sorrow; to all who are in despondency; to all who are perplexed in their affairs, and are trying to trust, and do not know how, and are as birds upon the ground cast out untimely from their nests, looking up and wishing that they could rise, but being unable to fly, help thou them. We beseech of thee that thou wilt deliver them from their enemies, and from all that seek their harm.

And we pray that thou wilt grant to us all, in the affluence of thy love, whatever we need—for what more do we want, if immortality is ours, and if God is ours? If we have heaven before us, what can harm us upon the earth?

We beseech of thee, if there are those in thy presence who are discouraged by their unworthiness, by their insincerity, by their accumulated evidence of sinfulness, and who are weary of striving to restrain unrestrainable passions, and of wandering along a way in which they are perpetually falling below their own ideal, lift upon them, we pray thee, such a gracious sense of Christ as that, though they are yet in a body of death, they shall be able to thank God through Christ for emancipation, for joy unspeakable, and for that peace which passeth all understanding.

We pray that thou wilt grant, especially, thy blessing to those who have come up hither to see if peradventure thou wouldest give them answer to their prayers. How many pray for their sick! Will the Lord be gracious to them. How many pray for their little children! Will the Lord remember them. How many pray for loved ones that are just starting forth upon life! Wilt thou be merciful in answering their prayers. Some are thinking of those who are upon the great deep. Some are striving to follow their kindred in their wanderings far away. Some are wondering what hath become of those that are precious to them. O thou God of all love, thou God of all consolation, listen to the prayers that silently go up before thee to-day. We pray that thou wilt grant that all perplexities may be removed, and that great luminousness of soul may come to those who have come into

thy presence clouded and dark. Thou that art Light, shine forth. Thou that art Power, give strength to those that are weak and ready to fall. Thou that art Love, give grace and forgiveness to all that stand trembling before thee. Reach forth those arms of infinite power, and wisdom, and love, and encircle us all, that we may feel lifted up by the nearness and might of God—that we may not feel that we are of the clod. May we feel that we are separated from our lower life in which we began, and that now we are created anew in Christ Jesus to higher aspirations, to better endeavors, to truer ambitions, to a nobler life; and may the Holy Spirit confirm us in all the upliftings and flyings of our soul.

Grant thy blessing to rest upon all the efforts of this church. May it be more useful in the days that are to come than it has been in the days that are passed. We beseech of thee, O Lord, that thou wilt bless all the schools that are under its care; all its labors for the poor and the outcast; all its endeavors to spread abroad knowledge and truth in the world. And we beseech of thee that thy servants who give so much of their time, and zeal, and thought to the welfare of their fellow-men may have fulfilled to them the blessings which they seek to bestow upon others. May they themselves be built up while they are laboring for the upbuilding of those around about them. So may thy cause be blessed in our midst, and be glorified.

Spread abroad the truth, we pray thee, in all our land. Remember thy churches of every name among men. Grant that they may live and be filled with the Spirit of God. May they not envy each other nor seek to beat each other down. May they walk together in the fellowship of love, leaving God to discern between the one and the other. We pray that the base passions, and envies, and angers which have reigned within thy churches, that the evil spirit which hath sought to launch out upon them furious troubles and afflictions, may be exorcised. O, thou that didst cast out the evil demon, though in doing it the child was rent and lay wallowing on the ground and foaming, behold how the child again, the infant church, possessed of evil, lies in frantic convulsion of passions, and hatreds, and rivalries; and speak thou the word; and grant that peace may come for discord, and that confidence may come for suspicion and for jealousy, and that love may come instead of repulsion and hatred. Deliver thine own people, and bring forth a people zealous of good works, whose power shall be in the power of manifesting God.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt let the promises speedily ripen to their fulfillment which respect all the world. Let the darkness flee away; let night be no more; and grant that at last that sun may rise which will stand without setting a thousand years.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit.
Amen.

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

GRANT unto us, our Father, the divine blessing. Enlarge our conceptions of thee, of life, of ourselves, and of thy plan in life. Humble us in our sense of our own want of attainment, of our want of excellence, and of our want of being. More and more may we humble ourselves because we see ourselves as we ought to see ourselves. And grant, we pray thee, that by faith we may rest upon the Beloved, knowing that all that in which we are deficient shall be made up to us by and by through the gift of God, so that his righteousness shall become our righteousness, so that his wisdom shall become our wisdom, and so that we shall be justified by him, and sanctified by the blessedness of the eternal world. And to thy name shall be the praise of our salvation, Father, Son, and Spirit, evermore. *Amen.*

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